



East Lansing Catholic Community
elcatholics.org



Wedding Liturgy Preparation

at St. Thomas Aquinas and
St. John Church & Student Center

*"The love of a man and a woman is made holy in the sacrament of marriage
and becomes the mirror of God's everlasting love."*

-Rite of Marriage

Congratulations on your engagement! May this be a season of grace and heavenly blessing.

You are coming to the Catholic Church to be married. A Catholic wedding is so much more than a social event. It is a sacrament in which a man and woman become husband and wife in the presence of God, the wedding Priest or deacon, and your family and friends.

This document will help you plan your wedding liturgy at St. Thomas Aquinas, St. John Church & Student Center or the MSU Alumni Chapel. Be sure to also consult with the Chapel Coordinator at Michigan State University when using that facility. <http://www.union.msu.edu/weddings/alumnichapel>
When you choose your wedding time at the Alumni chapel please note this on your liturgy planning document.

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish
955 Alton Rd.
East Lansing, MI 48823
517-351-7215

St. John Church & Student Center
327 MAC Ave.
East Lansing, MI 48823
517-337-9778

www.elcatholics.org/marriage

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Director of Music Ministry: Teresa DuSell

517-351-7215, ext. 318 or tdusell@elcatholics.org

Please Note:

To be married at St. Thomas Aquinas or St. John Church & Student Center, one or both persons of the engaged couple must be a practicing Catholic, and be either:

*Registered permanent community member

*From a family registered at this parish

*A current MSU student, faculty or staff member

*A recent graduate of MSU.

Wedding Times

Wedding celebrations are scheduled as follows:

- ◆ 4:00 PM-6:00 PM Friday at either site
- ◆ 10:30AM Saturday at St. Thomas Aquinas
- ◆ 11:00 AM Saturday at St. John
- ◆ 1:30 PM Saturday at St. Thomas Aquinas
- ◆ 2:00 PM Saturday at St. John

Civil Marriage License

A Michigan civil marriage license must be delivered to the facility coordinator/presider before the wedding **at the rehearsal**. In Michigan, it takes three days to process the civil wedding license application. A marriage license is obtained from the County Clerk where you reside (if in Michigan) or where the wedding takes place. For Ingham County the County Clerk is located in Mason, MI. Licenses can be obtained one month prior to the wedding date.

Facility Coordinator & Presider

Since our parish hosts more than 40 weddings each year, you will be assigned a Facility Coordinator. Your coordinator will conduct your wedding rehearsal and make sure things run smoothly on the day of your wedding. If you have a wedding Mass, he/she will act as your sacristan.

Fees

There is a \$100 fee for the Facility Coordinator. This person will make sure the building and rooms are open, run the rehearsal, and be at the wedding to assist. You will pay the coordinator at the rehearsal for the wedding.

An offering for the presiding priest or deacon (\$100-150) is appropriate. If any of these fees are problematic, please discuss this with the priest or deacon. This is given to the Facility Coordinator at the rehearsal for the wedding.

If you would like the parish to livestream your wedding, two options are available. Option A at \$200 and Option B at \$350. The Director of Worship will provide you with additional information and contact the Outreach Mass Coordinator to book the livestream. Livestreaming is only available at St. Thomas Aquinas. Payment in the form of a check should be given to the Facility Coordinator at the rehearsal as well.

Planning the Wedding Celebration:

Rite of Marriage: Within or Without Mass?

When two practicing Catholics marry, they should celebrate the Rite of Marriage within Mass. When a Catholic and a person of another faith tradition marry, they should celebrate the Rite of Marriage without Mass. Each ceremony is valid.

The readings and responsorial psalms for the Rite of Marriage can be found on our website www.elcatholics.org/marriage

A consultation to review music selections, reading selections and to discuss the wedding (this includes weddings at the Alumni Chapel) will be scheduled with you 2-3 months prior to your wedding.

Music and Musicians

- ◇ The parish music ministry program will provide a pianist or organist and a cantor for your wedding liturgy.
- ◇ Recorded music is not permitted in the Catholic liturgy.
- ◇ Arrangements for additional musicians (violin, trumpet, string quartet, etc.) may be made for additional fees.

Musician	Rate
Pianist/Organist	Wedding Ceremony- \$175 Wedding Mass- \$200
Cantor/Vocalist	Wedding Ceremony- \$150 Wedding Mass- \$175
Instrumentalists	\$175 or more—please ask about specific instruments

Note: Musicians are to be paid prior to the beginning of your wedding liturgy. Checks payable directly to each musician are to be brought to your rehearsal to be given to your coordinator.

Photographs and Videography

Photographers must be mindful that a wedding is a sacred and sacramental celebration and thus they are not to be a distraction to the ceremony. A professional photographer may take non-flash photography throughout the liturgy, as long as it is done in good taste and does not interfere with the liturgy. **Photography in the church before and after the liturgy is limited to 30 minutes.**

Videotaping is permitted. The video camera is to remain stationary and may not block the aisle.

Flowers and Decorations

Flowers should be delivered to the northeast entry at St. Thomas Aquinas (near the Bride's Room) and to the Gathering Space at St. John. Once the flowers are distributed, either the florist or a designee from the wedding party must clear away the floral boxes, paper, and debris.

Floral arrangements may be placed in the sanctuary in front of or around the altar. It is not appropriate to place flowers on the altar table itself. The flowers may not be taller than the altar table. We welcome you to leave the altar flowers in the church as a donation for the weekend masses. If you want to leave them, please tell the Facility Coordinator.

If you will be using pew decorations, use pew clips or ribbon to attach them. No tape of any kind is permitted on the pews. The decorations must be removed immediately after the celebration.

An aisle runner is not permitted. If you have a flower girl, she may not drop the petals. The aisle must be kept clear.

No Bubbles, Rice, Birdseed, Confetti, etc.

The throwing of rice, birdseed, “environmentally friendly” confetti, bubbles, bird release, or any other after ceremony “extras” is not in keeping with the sacred liturgical activity, therefore, they are not allowed. A special concern for the Parish is to prevent a wedding guest from slipping and being injured.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Engaged couples are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the Sacrament of Matrimony. Many opportunities are available between St. Thomas and St. John. If a priest is presiding over your ceremony, the priest may be available at the conclusion of the wedding rehearsal for Reconciliation.

Guest Book and Receiving Lines

Please plan on setting up your guest book and receiving line at your reception site not at the church.

Wedding Program

Wedding programs are allowed. Creating and producing wedding programs are the responsibility of the wedding couple. A designee of the wedding party is required to collect all of the programs from the pews following the wedding.

Wedding Consultants and Personal Attendants

If you are utilizing the services of a wedding consultant, please advise him or her that the **wedding rehearsal and wedding ceremony are the responsibility of St Thomas Aquinas’ and St John’s staff.** Our facility coordinators will take care of everything. They are trained and experienced. They know what works in the church and the priest's preferences. It is not required for an outside consultant to attend the rehearsal. Please remember that personal attendants and wedding consultants (if attending) are expected to follow the directives of the parish staff.

Wedding Rehearsal

Rehearsals can be scheduled with Denise Zakerski. Typically, the rehearsal will be scheduled at or after 5:00pm the day before your wedding.

Rehearsals last approximately 60 minutes and should start and end on time, so please plan accordingly. The Facility Coordinator will run the rehearsal.

You will need to bring your marriage license, musician fees, facility coordinator fee, and priest stipend to the rehearsal and give them to the facility coordinator. Your coordinator will take care of distributing them to the proper people. If the wedding programs are going to be used, it is required to bring them to the Rehearsal.

Bride's & Groom's Rooms

Rooms for the wedding party are available at both St. John and St. Thomas. They are available two hours prior to the wedding unless other arrangements are made with the facility coordinator.

Witnesses signing the marriage license

Under Michigan law, the witnesses have to be at least 18 years of age, as they need to be able to understand what they are witnessing, and be able to sign their legal signature.

Ushers

It is helpful to have ushers in addition to groomsmen. Groomsmen are often busy with photographs as the guests are arriving and are therefore unable to seat them. Ushers are also able assist at the beginning and end of the ceremony.

Children in the Wedding Party – Ring Bearers and Flower Girls

The parish recommends that children in the wedding party be at least six years of age. Experience has shown that younger children find it difficult to walk down the aisle. Often their parents are in the wedding party and are not available to assist their children, or to calm them if they are nervous or frightened. If children are included in the wedding party, please be mindful of their unique needs and plan accordingly.

Please note that flower petals may not be dropped in the aisle.

Choosing Readers

The wedding celebration can include up to three readers at the liturgy. The couple has the following options for readers:

- one person for the first reading, one for the second reading, and one for the Universal Prayers (petitions)
- one person reads the first and second readings and the Universal Prayers
- one person reads the first reading, one person reads the second reading, and the Presider reads the Universal Prayers.

If the couple is celebrating the Rite of Marriage with a Mass, the readers must be Catholic. If the couple is celebrating a Rite of Marriage without a Mass, the readers may be Catholic or another Christian faith.

When choosing readers, please choose people who have had experience with reading in their own parish or church who can confidently proclaim the Word of God. Readers should plan on attending the wedding rehearsal. Copies of the readings will be provided at the wedding rehearsal and ceremony.

Seating Pattern Options

Generally, there are two options for seating. In both options, the immediate family of the bride sits on the left side facing the altar and the immediate family of the groom on the right side. In the first option, there is no distinction in seating for other guests. In the second option, those greeting at the doors will ask guests whether they wish to be seated on the “bride’s side” or the “groom’s side.”

CHURCH FACILITY RESTRICTIONS

- Food and anything other than water is prohibited in the church, bride’s room, and groom’s room. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the premises.
- Smoking is prohibited in all parts of our buildings at all times.

Clean-up after the Wedding Ceremony

Please designate a friend or family member to ensure that the church facility is left in good order:

- Bride’s and groom’s rooms cleaned and returned to their original condition
- Wedding programs collected
- Floral boxes, floral paper, and debris removed
- Decorations removed
- Floral arrangements removed (*If not being left for the weekend masses*)

Parking and Accessibility at St John

For weddings at St. John Church & Student Center, a map with parking instructions can be provided and may be included as part of your invitation. An elevator is accessible through the backdoor via the alley or the Grove Street Ramp. Please note that East Lansing’s parking meters and ramp fees are in effect on Saturdays.

THE WEDDING LITURGY

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Processional

In most weddings, the priest or deacon goes first with the groom, then the bridesmaids and groomsmen, and finally the bride. The bride and/or the groom may be accompanied by either or both parents, if desired. A second option is for the couple to process together after the wedding party. You will need to choose music for the procession of your wedding liturgy. Some couples choose a single piece of music for this procession; others choose two pieces, with the second piece beginning as the bride enters.

Greeting and Introduction

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Ordinarily a couple will choose one Old Testament and one New Testament reading along with the Psalm and Gospel reading. At least one reading that explicitly speaks of Marriage must be chosen. The Wedding Liturgy of the Word Packet can be found on our website:

www.elcatholics.org/marriage

Old Testament Reading

If your wedding is scheduled for the Easter season (the seven weeks following Easter), the first reading is already predetermined. It will be Revelation 19:1, 5-9a.

Responsorial Psalm

A link to the audio examples can be found at the top of your wedding planning spreadsheet.

New Testament Reading

Gospel Acclamation

The Celtic Alleluia is led by the cantor prior to the reading of the Gospel.

Gospel Reading (Read by priest or deacon)

THE RITE OF MARRIAGE

Questions before the Consent (Vows)

1) N. and N., have you come here to enter into Marriage without coercion, freely and wholeheartedly?

2) Are you prepared, as you follow the path of Marriage, to love and honor each other for as long as you both shall live?

3) Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God and to bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

Bride/Groom: “I have.”

“I will.”

“I will.”

Consent (Vows)

The priest or deacon invites you to join hands and declare your consent to enter into marriage before God and the Church. Two options are given in the rite for which form the consent may take.

[Consent 1]

I, **N.**, take you, **N.**, to be my wife/husband.
I promise to be faithful to you
in good times and in bad,
in sickness and in health.
I will love you and honor you
all the days of my life.

[Consent2]

I, **N.**, take you, **N.**, for my lawful wife/husband,
to have and to hold, from this day forward,
for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish,
until death do us part.

You may choose to memorize these vows or repeat them after the priest or deacon.

After you have declared your consent, the presider recognizes this. Two options are given:

[Reception of Consent 1]

May the Lord in his kindness
strengthen the consent you have declared before
the Church, and graciously bring to fulfillment
his blessing within you.
What God joins together, let no one put asunder.

[Reception of Consent 2]

May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the
God of Jacob, the God who joined together our
first parents in paradise,
strengthen and bless in Christ the consent you
have declared before the Church, so that
what God joins together, no one may put
asunder.

Blessing of Rings

The priest or deacon asks God to bless the wedding rings.

As you put the rings on each other's finger, you repeat after the priest or deacon,

“**N.**, receive this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Universal Prayer

The marriage rite continues with the Universal Prayer or petitions. This is a set of prayers specifically directed to the larger needs of the world, the church, and our communities. The congregation responds: “Lord Hear Our Prayer.”

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST (**omitted if wedding is without Mass*)

***Preparation of the Gifts**

***Prayer over the Gifts**

***Eucharistic Prayer**

The Lord’s Prayer

Nuptial Blessing

***Exchange of Peace**

***Lamb of God**

***Communion Processional**

This song accompanies the procession as the assembly comes forward to receive communion. To enable participation, it is best to choose a song with which you are familiar; verses may be sung by the cantor.

Suggested Communion songs:

I Am the Bread of Life #945

Ubi Caritas #696

One Bread, One Body #932

Taste and See #930

Now in this Banquet #937

The Servant Song #751

The Summons #790

***Prayer after Communion**

CONCLUDING RITES

Final Blessing

The liturgy concludes with a final blessing prayed by the presider.

Presentation of the Couple

The presider will introduce you as a married couple for the first time.

Recessional or Song of Sending Forth

A musical selection will be played as the bride and groom and wedding party recess.

